

CSREES Portfolio Review Expert Panel Report Summary

Portfolio 1.1 Agricultural Markets and Trade CY 1999 - 2003

SUMMARY

External Review Completed: July 2004

Portfolio Description

The Agricultural Markets and Trade (AMT) portfolio focuses on the marketing system that assembles agricultural commodities, converts them into food products, and distributes those products to consumers around the world. CSREES provides program leadership and funding to a combination of research- education-extension programs that enhance the performance of the food marketing system by helping producers, food companies, consumers, and society make better marketing and public policy decisions. The public policy portion of this portfolio also includes a broad range of domestic policy issues. The portfolio includes three CSREES Knowledge Areas:

- KA 603 Market Economics
- KA 604 Marketing and Distribution Practices
- KA 610 Domestic Policy Analysis

Summary of Comments and Recommendations

In 2004 a panel comprised of independent experts from the field was convened to assess and score the current state of the Agricultural Markets and Trade Portfolio. A discussion of specific comments and recommendations related to each of the dimensions of the three Office of Management and Budget (OMB) research and development (R&D) criteria used (relevance, quality, and performance) is provided below.

Relevance

The portfolio lacks focus on critical issues. Too much attention is given to evaluating existing policy relative to the development of new policies and the analysis of policy alternatives. However, the portfolio exceeds expectations in its wide varieties of projects. It has done a good job in the identification of emerging issues and has integrated research, extension and education. Finally, it has demonstrated a good mix of work with other disciplines.

Quality

The alignment is generally good and current and appropriate methodologies are used in research, teaching, and extension. Also, stakeholder input is at a high level and stakeholder needs are being met. However, more attention should be given to projects that emphasize the "public good" rather than "private good" and CSREES and Land-Grant Universities need to do a better job of communicating stakeholder needs to individual faculty.

Performance

The portfolio has visibility despite few leadership resources devoted to it. While most projects are completed on time, many projects have continued well beyond their allotted time, particularly Hatch research projects. Agency guidance and portfolio accountability are poor; specifically, there is an immediate need for leadership in the area of economics and an improved post-award evaluation process needs to be implemented.

Portfolio Score

Portfolio 1.1 received a total score of 75 from the panel. This score places the portfolio in the category 'moderately effective in supporting CSREES objectives.'